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WHAT I SAW AND HEARD IN LATIN AMERICA

by G. Christian Weiss

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by

G. Christian Weiss

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. . . about the cover

The cover design portrays a missionary who has just received a canvas bucket attached by a 1500-ft. cord to a low-circling airplane. The bucket can be landed gently within inches of any desired spot and may contain medicines and other supplies. This amazingly simple device was discovered by Nate Saint, a missionary aviator in South America.

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Chapter I

NEBRASKA TO HAITI

Paul and Silas set an interesting precedent when they returned from their first missionary journey. The record is: "And when they were come, and had gathered the church (at Antioch) together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).

Away back in the early church the custom was established that when missionaries returned from trips abroad, they reported to the church at home what God had been doing through them in the regions beyond. This was the first foreign missionaries' report to the home church, and the congregation at Antioch must have been thrilled as Paul and Barnabas related the wonderful experiences of that first missionary journey. Revivals had been experienced by the grace of God, souls had turned from darkness to light, and the

missionaries had actually left churches behind that were functioning on their own, even though the trip occupied only a matter of months. Of course, there was no language barrier to be overcome, and in many of the towns where they went there was a nucleus of Jews, so that the people were somewhat familiar with the Scripture; and the apostles could go into the synagogues and begin with the enlightened Jews. It was a glorious report they had to bring of how God had opened the door of faith among the heathen and how many of them had turned from sin and the worship of idols to Christ.

I am sure that Paul and Barnabas were no more happy and thrilled as they came back to Antioch than I was when I returned to Lincoln, Nebraska, from Latin America in early June, 1954. In some ways I feel that this tour was the most profitable one I have ever had. I came back more encouraged and more challenged this time than from any other foreign trip I have taken, of which there have been seven or eight altogether.

I left Lincoln about midnight, Monday, April 5, 1954, and arrived in Chicago on

Tuesday evening, having gone by way of Kansas City on business relative to the trip. My son, Bernard, who is a student at Wheaton College, met me at the Chicago airport. We had a few hours together; then I boarded the plane for Miami, reaching that city about five o'clock in the morning. After attending to a few documents and other technicalities I left Miami around eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning, April 7. About two-thirty in the afternoon our plane arrived at Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, in the West Indies. I was met at the airport by Ralph Odman, of the Unevangelized Fields Mission.

Rev. James Murray, of Prairie Bible Institute in Canada, arrived the same day on another plane. He and I were chosen to minister in conventions in Haiti and Cuba. I had never met him before, but we were destined to have some rich fellowship together in prayer, ministry, and traveling.

Another American brother we met in Haiti was Rev. Wesley Grant, a colored Baptist pastor, of Asheville, North Carolina. I had met him previously in the States, but it was indeed a pleasant surprise to enjoy fellowship with him in

Haiti. He too was on a missions tour, his own church helping to support missionary work in Haiti and in Cuba. He surely derived the maximum benefit from his trip. We enjoyed his fellowship greatly. He told us that when he was getting ready to leave for Haiti,a preacher friend of his in Asheville announced, "Rev. Grant is going to make a trip down to Hades." Brother Grant told us that he carefully corrected this brother. He told him that it was Haiti, not Hades, that he was going to; but in spite of it all, the friend kept on mispronouncing it, finally saying, "Well, anyway, I know it's hot down there where you-all's goin'." And all of us who have been in Haiti can vouch for that!

I went to a service that first night in Port-au-Prince, held in a large tent. The meetings were being carried on nightly, and this was about the fourth night. These services were sponsored by the U.F.M. missionaries whose headquarters are in Port-au-Prince, where they also have a good Bible Institute. There was a large congregation present, I suppose a couple of thousand, even though the tent was not extremely roomy. People were crowded

around the outside of the tent, as well as in it, till a downpour came along, and then they too crowded in! Due to a short circuit in the electric wires, caused by the rain, the lights went out shortly after the meeting began. Most of the service went on in the dark, but finally, just before the invitation was given, the men got the short fixed and the lights back on.

Probably a dozen people came forward that night in response to the invitation to accept Christ. The service was conducted in the Creole language, the official tongue of Haiti, a sort of corrupted French.

The next morning we left by the Haitian Airline for Les Cayes, about 150 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince. The island of Haiti is divided into two sections, something like huge fingers. Les Cayes is in the lower finger. That was an interesting flight. The plane was operated entirely by Haitians speaking the Creole language. I could understand quite a number of the words from the French, though I had much difficulty in trying to follow a conversation and had no way of communicating with them. At any rate, we got in the plane and took off.

We flew for an hour and a half or so and then landed. Murray and I got off the plane. The first thing that impressed us was the intense heat, and the second thing was that we were right out in the jungles. Anyway, we got off the plane and went over to the little bamboo roof at the "airport" to get out of the hot sun. We wondered why no missionary was there to meet us but decided we would get into town some way. (There was, in fact, a little pickup truck at the bamboo shelter.)

Our baggage, however, had not been taken off the plane, so we went back to the craft and with our limited use of French succeeded in getting the idea across to them that we had some luggage that was to come off. They shook their heads; there was no more baggage to be unloaded there. We were determined we were not going to let that plane go off with our bags. Accordingly we kept on remonstrating and finally crawled right up into the baggage compartment of the plane. There were our suitcases. We pointed to them triumphantly, indicating that they were ours.

The man looked at the check labels and said, "These go to Les Cayes." We had

gotten off at the wrong place! We were at the town of Jeremie, a long way from Les Cayes, with no passable road between the two places. Had we been left there, it would have been for a whole week, because the plane stops at that point only once a week. There would have been no way to have gotten from Jeremie over the mountains to Les Cayes. I was glad we discovered our mistake in time. We got back on the plane, flew over the mountains, and at last safely reached Les Cayes about midafternoon.

The convention began that evening. When we arrived at the mission station (The West Indies Mission), the Haitian Christians were pouring in from all directions. On every path and trail we looked we saw a stream of people—black people, dressed in very colorful clothing, neat and clean, most of them with a load of some kind on top of their heads containing their clothing and food. All that day they kept streaming in from everywhere. By night there must have been about 6,000 people gathered for the first session of the conference. By the next day it was estimated that there were approximately 8,000 people

gathered.

It was one of the most unusual conventions of its kind I ever attended anywhere in the world. Those people seemed to be radiant with the joy of the Lord. Obviously they did not have much in this world to be happy about. Most of them were very poor; in fact I marvelled that they managed to dress so neatly. Some of them had walked for one hundred and twenty miles, many of them more than fifty miles—perhaps over half of them. The others either came from shorter distances, or rode on trucks and other vehicles, which down there they called "busses"!

No food was provided for these people at the conference; they had to bring and prepare their own. There were no accomodations provided for them, either—no rooms reserved, or anything of the kind, in fact, there were not any rooms. It is evident that they are not "rice Christians." It was agreed that the women would have the privilege of sleeping in the big Tabernacle, which has a dirt floor and a concrete platform. I suppose it seats about 5,000 people, the way they seat them there. As soon as the last service of the day was over, the

women would start pushing their way around in the Tabernacle to find a good soft (?) spot on the floor to sleep. Many of them slept on the benches, and many on the cement platform. If we did not get out of the pulpit as soon as we pronounced the benediction, we would have had to walk over those women. They would pick out their spot, so that nobody else would get it, and plunk right down. Five minutes after the Tabernacle was emptied, I am sure you could not have stepped in anywhere without stepping on sleeping women and children.

I never did find out where all the men slept; I saw them on the verandas of some of the missionaries' homes and some of the Bible Institute buildings, in hammocks swung between the trees, etc. I do not know how they kept dry; I do not think they did, because it seemed to rain about every day we were there.

It was intensely hot. Haiti and Panama were the two hottest places of the whole trip—exceedingly hot and sultry. The Spirit of God was so manifestly present in that convention, however, that we did not seem to mind the heat much. Normally I do not

like heat. It does not make me sick, but I am uncomfortable because I perspire so freely. But I did not pay too much attention to the terrific heat; other things commanded our attention—celestial things.

The meetings occupied most of the time, it seemed. We started in about nine o'clock in the morning and went till noon; then we started in again about 1:30 and continued till toward supper time. The evening services lasted till about ten o'clock each night—three meetings a day, 2 to 2½ hours each, in intense heat and with so many people crowded closely together under the roof of that Tabernacle; yet, as I said, we hardly paid attention to the heat.

The singing was such as you seldom hear. Colored people have unusual singing abilities, to begin with, and these people who had newly come to know the Lord and learned to sing, how they sang! The song service would usually last about an hour, including congregational singing and special numbers. The special singing, too, was excellent. That singing was something that deeply impressed me.

Usually the audience started singing before the actual service began. They

would file into the Tabernacle and spontaneously begin to sing without any leader. Sometimes I think they must have been singing for half an hour before any of us arrived to begin the official song service. Their testimonies, too, were such that you would not miss the meaning of them even though you could not understand their language. Most of the preaching was done by us two American brethren in English and relayed to the people by interpretation. Of course, there was also preaching in the Creole.

One man with whom I became acquainted, who impressed me above the other native Christians, was Pastor Lazier. He is tall, stately, light brown in color, and about six feet three inches tall—almost as tall as the President of Haiti, who is six feet four. This brother is an outstanding leader in the native Christian church. When he got up to speak, one could sense the presence of the Spirit of God in him and also how the native Christians honored and respected him as a kind of spiritual father.

One day Pastor Lazier gave a report on what had been accomplished in the native churches during the previous year. With

humility and radiant joy he reported that during the year there had been nearly 8,000 new professions of faith in Christ.

Walter Wunsche, who is the missionary leader of the West Indies work in Haiti, said to me after that report meeting, "Do you know, brother, we seldom have a public conversion here in Haiti, very seldom. Hardly ever do we even give an altar call."

I asked, "How do these people take their stand for Christ?"

"Well," he said, "they generally come to the homes of the missionaries or of the native pastors and say, 'We have been listening to the gospel, and now we are ready to accept Jesus. We've come for you to explain how we can be saved.' "

Then the worker has ample time to carefully explain again the way of salvation to them and to pray with them. Later they confess Christ openly before the church.

To me that was evidence of a real work of God. I believe it safe to say that (at least of the countries to the south of us, Latin America and the Indies) no country has witnessed quite the work of God's Spirit that has been going on in Haiti for about the past eight years. In about the

last dozen years, somewhere around 300,000 people have come to know Christ. Now many of these are untaught believers; the Missions have not been able to train workers in the Bible Institutes rapidly enough to supply all the congregations with pastors. Many of the men who are preaching to these congregations can scarcely read. You see, they have nothing written in Creole. Everything is in French; therefore, in order to read even the Bible, they must know French, and some of these pastors can scarcely read the French Bible, having little or no training. But they are doing the best they can to teach the new believers. The missionaries are, of course, bending their efforts on the Bible Institute program in order to prepare native pastors for these churches.

All in all, it was a glorious experience to be in Haiti. In my own experience I am quite sure that I have not visited any mission field where I felt such a mighty work of God's Spirit over such a long period of time as in this island. It was a real spiritual thrill. It had been necessary for me beforehand to take my choice between speaking at a similiar conference in

Jamaica, or this one in Haiti. Since I had been in Jamaica a couple of times before, I felt led to Haiti, and I now thank God it was so.

There is one other thing I would like to tell you about the visit to Les Cayes. Most blessings seem to be mixed with a degree of pain. At least many of them certainly are. I think the very richest blessings God gives usually come either in the midst of pain, or as a result of pain. It was so there in Les Cayes.

Immediately upon our arrival in that city I noticed that Mrs. Wunsche, herself Haitian born, appeared particularly worn and perhaps sad, even though still radiating the joy of the Lord. I learned that a baby had been born to them eight days before with a fatal spinal deformity. One or two of the vertebrae were missing from the spine, causing it to be disconnected. At that juncture there was a kind of tumor protruding from the back, covered with only a thin, transparent membrane, so that one could look right in and see the tiny baby's spinal cord. Mr. Wunsche had personally come to the airport to meet us, but when he got back to the house and the greetings

were over, I noticed she called him aside and whispered something to him, upon which they immediately withdrew. At that time I had not even known about the baby, but during the time he had come to the airport to meet us, the "sack" on the infant's back had ruptured and was draining—it would only be a matter of time until the little life would literally drain away.

It was in this condition that I first saw the little one. That was on Thursday. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, day and night the baby was slowly dying. It was a most heart-rending experience. I slept about a hundred feet away from their home, and for two long nights I could hear that helpless little one gasping for breath; she was past the weeping stage; her vocal cords could not sound any more.

That was the experience Mr. and Mrs. Wunsche had to go through during the convention. In spite of it all he stood beside me hour after hour on the platform of the huge Tabernacle and interpreted my messages to the people. I suppose it is more difficult to act as the interpreter than as the preacher. Yet hour after hour he stood at our side, with an ability I have seldom

known in an interpreter, and relayed our message to the people with a power and an unction that could have come only from the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday morning, about six o'clock Walter Wunsche came to our room, and I could tell by the expression on his face that God had taken the little one. He was haggard and weary, but nevertheless radiant, and said, "Our baby is gone. The Lord took her ten minutes ago."

I commented, "This has been a hard experience, hasn't it?"

He answered, "Yes, it has; it has been a very hard experience. But during this last night my wife and I believe we learned why God has done this. Our people here in Haiti have to suffer so much,and they have no one to help them when they do. Medical aid is unknown to most of them. When their children get sick,they just die. (Most of the Haitian women bury more children than they raise. That is true in many foreign lands; we found it so in Africa.) They just have to watch their children suffer and die."

He went on, "They observe us missionaries when we get sick and watch us get into airplanes and fly off to Port-au-Prince,

or even to Miami, where we have our high-class American doctors take care of us. Then we come flying back again. But when they get sick, they can't fly to a doctor. Maybe a local missionary is able to give them a little aid, and maybe not, and they just have to suffer it out. To them," he continued, "we must appear very protected, and we *are* very protected compared to the way they live. But now all these people at the conference have stood with us and watched us in our suffering when there was nothing anybody could do. I believe it was all a part of God's plan. I think God wanted us to know by experience a little bit about how our people suffer. And," he added, "I feel this experience was given to us in order that we might better reach these people for the Lord."

When he said that, his face seemed to light up. The very thought that out of their suffering such blessing might come was a thrill to his soul and to mine as well.

The conference closed on Sunday about one o'clock. The one single convention meeting on that day started about 8:30 in the morning and lasted until nearly 1:30 P.M.—a continous meeting. It closed with

a communion service, one that those of us who participated in will never forget. Then, about half past three, the people who had remained gathered together with the missionaries for a short funeral service, after which we carried the tiny home-made casket down the hill below the Wunsche home and buried the little body in a new cemetery chopped out of the jungle foliage. When we looked at the baby's face, it was hard to believe it was that of a twelve-day-old child. That face actually looked like the face of a ten-year-old child because of the suffering she went through, coming to our earth and leaving again the way she did. Yet she looked sweet.

As we watched the men fill the little grave I thought of what Walter Wunsche had said to me that morning. Somehow along with the blessings that God poured out on us in that convention there had to be this bit of pain in order that the way might be prepared for heavenly riches. (I saw other fresh missionary graves on this tour, too, graves of those with whom I visited, traveled, and preached eight years ago. They now "rest from their labors"—their works follow them.)

I thank God for what His Spirit has wrought on the island of Haiti. A few years ago there was hardly a missionary there. I remember when Oswald J. Smith recorded a missionary message on a Baptista film some fifteen years ago, or maybe less, how he called attention to the little island of Haiti right at our door step with hardly a missionary. What hath God now wrought!

Now let me briefly tell you the story behind it all.

Because of constant internal revolutionary trouble and incessant bloodshed that had long been going on in Haiti, the United States government sent its Marines in and by the "right or might" method reduced the island to law and order. Because of the high rate of sickness and mortality, our government had to provide a good many doctors, not only to help the Haitians but also to keep the American boys alive. Among them was a consecrated Christian doctor. This man became strangely and heavily burdened for Haiti, yet he did not know what to do. At that time there was no serious missionary endeavor in Haiti.

There was one thing he could do, and

that he did. He gave himself to prayer for the benighted country. For years, day by day, this man of broken health cried unto God for the land that lay so heavily upon his heart and conscience and which the Marines had called "The Hell-hole." The doctor never lived to see the answer to his prayers. On his death bed he called a friend to his bedside, Dr. T. Marshall Morsey. To Dr. Morsey he unburdened his heart concerning Haiti, telling him about his knowledge of that land and of the prayer burden he had carried in its behalf for so many years. Then he said, "Dr. Morsey, I'm dying. Will you give me your hand and by so doing promise me you will take the burden of Haiti upon your soul, and pray for it as I have done until you die or until God answers?"

Dr. Morsey, after sober and prayerful reflection, took the dying man's hand and said, "By the grace of God, I will." He then prayed on for Haiti; and in due time, through a chain of circumstances, in themselves miraculous, God sent his servants to benighted Haiti and poured out His Spirit upon the wretched, sin-ridden, poverty-stricken, disease-infested, Satan-dominated

island.

What I have just reported to you is, therefore, the fruit of prevailing prayer, personal self-denial, and the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Chapter II

CUBA AND COLOMBIA

From Les Cayes, where the convention was held, we traveled back to Port-au-Prince by "bus," a nine-hour trip and a very interesting one, to put it mildly. At Port-au-Prince we caught a Pan American Airways plane to Camaguey, which is about in the central part of Cuba. Camaguey has a good airport and is quite an international landing spot for planes. We spent not more than an hour, I think, getting from the airport to a bus station uptown and were soon on our way westward toward Los Pinos, where the Cuban headquarters and Bible Institute of the West Indies Mission are located.

It was difficult trying to shift my thinking into Spanish—for several reasons. To begin with, I had a bad head cold, which made it difficult for me to catch sounds; another reason was I had been in Haiti listening to French and Creole for a week; furthermore, I had not heard any Spanish for eight years; but I suppose the main

reason was I never did know Spanish to begin with! So I had trouble communicating but nevertheless got along.

The convention at Los Pinos was a time of rich blessing. Though considerably smaller than the Haiti convention, there were still from a thousand to twelve or thirteen hundred present for most of the sessions. This conference was held in connection with the graduating exercises of the Los Pinos Bible Institute. Twenty-four young people were graduated from the Institute, of whom seventeen were young men. They were in caps and gowns, which helped make the scene an impressive one. I got some good colored movies of the graduates in procession.

A wonderful spirit was in the convention, we felt, one of real hunger for God. Brother Lavastida, a Cuban Christian leader, several of the missionaries, and a number of the more spiritually mature native workers were burdened for a real revival in Cuba. He, with some of the others, came to my room before each service to pray for such an awakening. He prayed believing that God would send a revival to Cuba; perhaps we saw the beginning of it during those

convention days.

In Cuba I was joined by Dr. John R. Dick, of Grace Bible Institute, Omaha, Mr. Anton Becker, who has a missionary sister in Ecuador, also of Omaha, and Rev. Clifford Gustafson, of Grand Junction, Colorado. We drove from Los Pinos to Santa Clara, about twenty-five or thirty miles away, to meet the plane which they were all supposed to come on; but when it arrived, only Brother Gustafson was on it. Messrs. Dick and Becker had missed their plane connections in Chicago, which was the cause for their delay. When they failed to appear on the plane for which they were scheduled, I concluded that Mr. Dick's passport had not come; he had only one week in which to get it, which is not a very long time. (He had just become a naturalized citizen of the United States and of course could not apply for a U. S. passport until he was a citizen.)

We left word at the airport in Santa Clara that if two Americans arrived the next day who did not speak Spanish, the Pan American Airways man should put them on a bus to Los Pinos and notify us by long-distance telephone which bus it was, so that

we could meet it. The next day they appeared under this arrangement and thus were with us for a few days of the Cuba convention.

Following the Los Pinos convention we were able to visit two other mission works in Cuba: The Mission to Orphans, near Santa Clara, a very fine orphanage work, and also the Practical Missionary Training Center at Majagua, set up as a kind of boot camp in Cuba for missionaries of all societies.

Then we flew to Jamaica. We arrived at Montego Bay, on the north coast, and were met at the airport by a dear friend, Rev. S. H. Helwig, pastor of the local Calvary Baptist Church. I had been in Jamaica three times previously and had preached in this brother's church. It was a personal privilege to be entertained in his home the days we were in Montego Bay, while the other brethren were put up at a lovely resort hotel for a very nominal fee through the kindness of the owners, who are also friends of mine.

We had meetings in Calvary Church through Wednesday night and during the daytime visited some interesting places in

the inland, as well as along Jamaica's coast. Most of the people who attended these services seemed to be regular listeners to the Back to the Bible Broadcast; ninety per cent of them must have raised their hands when we asked how many listened to our program. A fine Jamaican lady handed me an envelope with a $5 American bill in it, saying, "This is to pay for my second square foot of the building there in Lincoln. I'm sorry it's a little late." That really touched my heart. It is difficult for people in Jamaica to get permission to send money out of the island. How she got the American money, I do not know, but she had it and gave it. May God bless her.

We were at Montego Bay through Wednesday night. On Thursday we took a train across the island to the capital city of Kingston. There was a misunderstanding about our schedule in Kingston, due to the failure of a letter sent to Cuba to reach me, as a consequence of which we missed a meeting that had been arranged in Mandeville. We felt badly about this. Nothing was scheduled in Kingston, but soon after our arrival at the YMCA there, which

was about noon, a man came to our room and said, "A group of businessmen are meeting here today for a luncheon. They would like to invite you and your friends to be their guests, and they wish you to speak to them." (We found that most of the people around the "Y" knew my name immediately in connection with the Back to the Bible Broadcast.) A number of these businessmen were fine Christians, we discovered. We thus had the grand opportunity of speaking to some of the leading businessmen of the city of Kingston not more than one hour after we got off the train, in spite of no previous plan!

That afternoon I contacted a Christian friend in the city, a local businessman, and he kindly spent the greater part of the afternoon taking us around Kingston, which was of real interest to the other brethren, who had not been in Jamaica before. In the evening I was invited by Rev. Harold Wildish, a well-known British evangelist in the West Indies, whom I had also known previously, to speak at a meeting in Maranatha Hall. He was conducting a revival meeting there at that time. Maranatha Hall is one of the "Brethren" halls. (The

Brethren have an outstanding gospel work in Jamaica, having four or five large congregations in the city of Kingston alone, and numerous others all over the Island.)

This hall is quite a large one, and there were about seven hundred people present on that Thursday night. None of the people knew that I, as a representative of the Back to the Bible Broadcast, would be in the meeting, but when Brother Wildish introduced me to the congregation and asked how many listened to the Broadcast, it seemed as though all the hands went up —we were not among strangers.

All over Jamaica, in fact, the employees at the airport, employees in the immigration offices, the customs officers, the railroad conductors, people on the streets, and even the beggars whom we talked to were familiar with the Back to the Bible Broadcast. The majority of them hear it from HCJB, a few direct from the States by long wave. It was a real thrill to travel through Jamaica as a representative of the Broadcast.

We left Jamaica on Friday, April 23, and flew to Bogota, Colombia. Our plane was delayed leaving Kingston, due to

motor trouble. (It seems that every time I have taken off from the Kingston airport, four or five times now, there has always been motor trouble.) We were delayed several hours. I had sent a cable to Bogota, informing our friends when we would arrive and on what flight, but due to the mechanical trouble the schedules were all mixed up that day; and although three different missionaries were going back and forth to the airport at Bogota the entire evening trying to meet us, when we actually landed, there was no one there whom we knew.

I was not much acquainted with Bogota, having only passed through it once before, which was somewhat to our disadvantage. Though we were acquainted with a number of the missionaries in the city, we had in possession only their P.O. box numbers, with no street addresses at all. We were more than two hours getting through immigration and customs, a "record" for me in spite of many travels.

When we finally got through the red tape, we took a taxi into town and went to a hotel. After reaching the hotel I was able, after considerable difficulty, to contact

one of the missionaries by telephone and report our arrival. It was then we learned that a room was reserved for us at a Christian lady's boarding house, which would have cost us about one fourth of what it was costing us to spend the night in the hotel. Since we had already registered at the hotel and been placed in our room, it was too late to move.

The next morning we had to go and "register" at the National Police Headquarters, according to the requirement for every foreigner spending more than 48 hours in the country. When we got there,we learned we were in trouble. (I had been fearing we might encounter some in Colombia.) Although they had held us up so long at the Bogota Airport the night before, they had not given us our tourist "landing cards," which should have been issued after we got off the plane. We had filled out the applications for these on the plane and given the applications to the steward, but the cards were not given to us when we passed through immigration. They had so exhausted our patience in customs that I failed to notice the omission and to ask for the cards.

When we went to the National Police, they asked, "Where are your visas?"

"We have no visas," I said. "We were told we did not need any."

The next question was, "Then where are your landing cards?"

"Well," I said, "we did not get them."

The police then inquired, "How did you get in? How did you get through immigration?"

I answered, "I don't know, but I do know that we spent two hours getting through."

We were flatly told that we would have to leave Colombia within forty-eight hours. I was determined that we were not going to do that and frankly told them, "We have our plans made and cannot change them now." But we were coldly told, "You have no right to be here, and you must leave."

We went back to the Pan American Airways office ("Avianca" in Colombia) and told them we regarded it as their fault that we had not been issued the tourist landing cards. We said, "Your representative should have seen to it that they gave us those cards before we got out of immigration. And one thing is certain; we are not going to leave Colombia. We'll simply

stay as long as our plans call for and face the music when we get ready to leave, but we're not going to leave the country within forty-eight hours." They then sent us to the office of the Foreign Minister (Bogota is the capital city of Colombia), for whom we waited in vain for two hours, although having been assured, "He will be here in a minute." We got there about nine o'clock and waited until eleven, but the "minute" never passed; the Minister never did appear. At last we went back again to Pan American and told them that we had been unable to contact the Foreign Minister. Seeing our determination, one of their head men then went with us to the National Police for our second trip and finally, probably by tipping somebody, secured a permit in writing for us to remain 15 days in Colombia.

We spent the week end in Bogota, visiting several missions. The two brethren from Mennonite churches, Messrs. Dick and Becker, went down to Cachepauy to visit the work of the General Conference Mennonites, about an hour's train trip from Bogota, where they spent the Sunday. Brother Gustafson and I went to the Pres-

byterian Church in Bogota Sunday morning for an early English service, and then in the afternoon I spoke at a meeting of the World Wide Evangelization Crusade, likewise in the evening. Mr. Gustafson also preached.

The thing that we noticed right from the start in Bogota, and later all through Colombia, was that the meetings we were in, almost without exception, had overflowing crowds. Invariably there were people standing, not only in the aisles, but in the windows and open doors as well. So the terrible persecutions that have raged in Colombia during the last five years, in which many lives were lost, certainly had not intimidated the people. (Between 50,000 and 70,000 were killed during the violence—not all Christians, of course.)

At the native service in Bogota Sunday morning we noticed two National Police officers in a car across the street taking notes of some kind as the people filed in. Probably they were tabulating certain individuals attending the meetings, or perhaps they simply wanted to know the number attending. (If they were keeping track of

the number, I can guarantee you they had a job by the time the whole crowd was there!) But the people themselves paid little attention to them; they simply walked into the church. That impressed us.

We learned by talking to Robert Lazear, who is the President of the Intermission Federation, that between 1948 and 1953 the evangelical constituency of Colombia increased by fifty-one per cent during those years of persecution. Now that is tremendous. It was dangerous even to be called a Christian in those bloody days. In Colombia 160 mission schools were closed and nearly 50 churches and chapels completely destroyed. Many believers were martyred. Yet in spite of that, the people seemed to be fearless.

After leaving Bogota, we went down to the Cauca Valley, the part of Colombia I was especially interested in visiting. The Cauca is in the south central part of the Republic, a large valley lying fairly high between two mountain ranges and said to be one of the most fertile places in all the world. It is naturally one of the most densely populated areas of Colombia. I had traveled and preached in this valley

before. We spent a week there and visited, I think, about eight mission stations and a dozen native churches. Also we visited a number of elementary schools, one Bible Institute, and two preparatory schools, one for girls and one for boys. Everywhere good crowds came to the meetings and interest was keen.

One thing that deeply impressed me was that almost every native church we visited offered to pay our traveling expenses incurred in coming to them, the average offering being about twenty pesos. A peso is worth about forty cents in American money but to a Colombian actually means more than a dollar does to us. On one single trip taking us to several churches, we were offered around eighty pesos, better than the equivalent of our $80, really, for our traveling expenses. We did not take the money, but I was personally touched because in no foreign field that I have visited before did a native church ever offer to pay my traveling expenses for coming to them.

In an Indian congregation up in the mountains, though we did not take their church offering, one old Christian came to

me, a poor man whose only income is what he makes weaving baskets, and pressed four pesos in my hand, saying, "I want each one of you to have a peso to buy frescos. I know you foreigners need something to refresh you in our hot climate." ("Fresco" is soda pop.) We took the money, feeling it would hurt that old saint if we did not, thanking him from the bottom of our hearts.

The journey up to this Indian congregation was quite interesting. An automobile was hired to take us into the mountains as far as we could get by vehicle, at which place the Indians were to meet us with saddle horses to take us the rest of the way. Our chauffeur went as far as he dared and finally got the car stuck in the mud. The agreement before we started was that if he got stuck, we would help push the car out. We had to keep our word. The sloppy mud did not look inviting, but we rolled up our trouser legs and waded in to push the automobile out. I thought it would really require a good hard push, but with the combined efforts of four of us it responded far more quickly than I anticipated, and before I knew it, I had landed

on all fours in the mud. I had been pushing against the front. The car had gained traction and got away from me before I had time to get my balance, so there was nothing to keep me from going headlong into the mud hole. I guess I was quite a sight! The sad part of it was that I had no other clothes with me on that trip and had to visit five churches after that, wearing the same suit. The mud dried rapidly in the hot sun, and after arrival at the church, I was able to get the worst of it off with a stiff brush. I certainly would not have been acceptable for an American pulpit, but down there everyone understood and I was not particularly bothered. Nobody minds a little mud or a few mud stains in South America!

My readers will want to know something about the persecutions in Colombia. If any person had predicted to me eight years ago that the things which have happened in Colombia during these past few years were going to happen, I would have confidently shaken my head and said, "No, that can't happen in Colombia." But it did happen! It happened on a scale almost incomprehensible. Though much of the

world today knows in part the story of the bloody persecutions that took place there, the full story will never be known, at least not in detail. Some things, in fact, are too terrible to put into print. But the Christians and missionaries, as well as other victims of the violence who lived through those days, will never erase the picture from their memories.

There is no persecution worse than the combined political-religious type. What happened in Colombia was political in nature but definitely agitated by the Church of Rome. Roman Catholics have held almost undisputed sway for several centuries in these Latin American countries. As the gospel began to gain such strong favor among the people that many turned away from the old church, the religious hierarchy became alarmed and determined to do something about it, Colombia being a particular example. They made use of a political "smoke screen" to achieve their purposes. All Protestants and Evangelicals were branded as "communists" and "rebels," fit only to be driven out of the country or annihilated. That Colombia had its share of socialists and communists

no one will deny, but that the evangelical believers were communists or sponsors of communism is completely false.

The Colombian populace was resolved into two main political parties, the "Conservatives" (the church party) and the "Liberals." In the ranks of the liberals were people of all classes, doubtless including communists and socialists. Naturally, any of the believers interested in politics belonged to the liberal, or anti-church, party but in no way endorsed the "red" program.

The conservatives bided their time, waiting for a golden opportunity. When the time drew near for the election of a new president, mob violence sponsored by them broke out all over the country, driving all known liberals away from their homes and into hiding so that they could not go to the local polls on election day. Many in fact were kept away by violence and threat of death. The scheme worked, and the Catholic candidate was elected. There is pretty good ground for the rumor that the man elected, Senor Gomez, having been excommunicated some time before from the Roman Catholic church, had personally promised

the Pope that if he were received back into the church he would, upon successful election to the Colombian Presidency, see to it that no Protestant church would remain in the country by the end of one year. He certainly bent his efforts to carry out such a purpose. But, thank God, his purpose failed!

All known members of the liberal party of Colombia were exposed to violence, bloodshed, and actual death; and along with them a host of evangelical believers suffered severely, many of them mercilessly slaughtered. It was Rome's golden opportunity to strike her religious blow under the guise of political revolution. Mobs marched into churches during service time, attacking the congregation, in some instances killing the pastor and others in attendance. Churches were destroyed by fire and demolition. School after school was closed by order of the local officials. In many instances the local police force were under direct orders of the bishops and priests. Churchmen very frequently were behind the mobs attacking groups of Christians, and sometimes these mobs were led by them in person. The cry all

over the country was, "Down with the Protestants!"

The cry of "communism" has been a very effective smoke screen in various countries for the use of the Roman Catholic heirarchy toward regaining supreme control in areas that were gradually slipping through their fingers.

The story of violence and bloodshed in the Republic of Colombia during these past five years in the name of "religion" is a blot on the pages of Colombian history and a deep-dyed stain upon the already spotted record of the Roman Catholic Church.

I would like to give a few incidents which occurred during the persecutions. William Shillingsburg, one of the missionaries who are being supported by the Back to the Bible Broadcast, was visiting a certain native congregation and had been assigned to sleep in the guest room kept for visiting preachers. He felt that he was not getting the proper amount of fresh air where his bed was located, so he moved it to another position in the room, nearer a window, in the hopes of getting a little more breeze. About midnight three bullets

were fired through the door near the place where the head of his cot had been, at just the right height, so that they would surely have struck Bill in the head or neck, had the bed been left in its original position. The would-be assassin knew that the missionary was sleeping there and deliberately planned to take his life. It was a wonderful instance of God's overruling.

One account related to me was slightly amusing. A certain man in an out-of-the-way town, who had been a Christian not more than eight or nine months, was warned by his neighbors that he must no longer allow the evangelicals to hold meetings in his home. This man was a fearless Christian and very bold in his testimony, and he told them, "This is my house, and I have the right to have any meetings conducted in it that I may choose. I am a Christian, and these people are going to teach the Word of God to my family and to as many of my neighbors as wish to come." So the weekly meetings in his home continued.

One night a mob came, armed mainly with machetes, which are huge knives with long, heavy blades, something like the old-fashioned corn knives, only larger and

heavier. (One native worker's body was cut completely in two with one stroke of a huge machete as he was escaping over the back wall of the place where he had been preaching. The upper part of his body fell on the outside of the wall and the lower part on the inside.)

When this man saw the mob approaching, he locked and barred the door of his house. The attackers began to beat on the door, calling, "Open up."

He answered, "I won't open up."

"You open up or we'll break in," came the threat.

"Break the door if you can," he said, "but I'm not going to open it." So someone struck the door a heavy blow and split out a portion of the panel, making a crack about three inches wide. The man of the house put the tip of his double-barrelled shotgun into the crack and said with a calm voice, "Will you please open it up a little wider? I can't see you quite well enough yet." The mob left!

While there were some cases of real heroism, there were many cases of terrible tragedy, too. Whole families, especially of the pastors, were slaughtered in cold

blood. In one place a pastor, with his wife and four children, were hacked to pieces with machetes, without feeling or mercy. In Palmira the missionaries, going for their mail morning after morning, saw city employees picking up dozens of dead bodies from the streets in carts and hauling them away. This continued for weeks. A charge of dynamite was exploded one night in the wall of the chapel of the Bible Institute building there, but nobody was injured.

The story is too long and too gruesome to tell. Many have already been partially informed through various channels; and as already has been stated, the whole story simply cannot be told. On the whole, I feel that the persecutions were not a hindrance to the work of Christ; if anything, the native church is stronger because of it, both spiritually and numerically. Statistics indicate that there has been more than a 50-per-cent growth since the violence broke out—and it must be remembered that the evangelical church was already very strong in Colombia. All of this is but another demonstration of the fact that persecution is no effective weapon against the Church of Christ, but rather that the blood of the

martyrs is the real seed of the Church.

The missionaries in Colombia are weary. Some of their number have died; some have had to go home; practically no replacements have been allowed to come out now for the past four or five years. They need our prayers.

The matter of gravest concern at the time of this writing is that the Church party of the Colombian Congress is endeavoring to push the adoption of a new constitution, which, if accepted, would virtually end aggressive Protestant missionary work.

The violence and persecution during these past few years was really illegal, even though it was backed, without doubt, by the Gomez government; but if the proposed new constitution becomes effective, it would then become a legal matter and a far more serious situation to face. The constitution by which Colombia has been governed for the past many years asserts and assures religious liberty to all. Somehow we do not believe that God is going to allow the persecution to go through, and many of God's people are praying to that effect. Whatever happens, *pray for the native church of Colombia.*

Chapter III

ECUADOR–LAND OF THE EQUATOR

We left the Republic of Colombia about noon on May 3, flying via Avianca (Colombian Airline) to Quito, Ecuador. The flight was beautiful, as the weather was clear and calm, and the scenery of the gorgeous Andes would have fascinated anyone. In Quito we were met at the airport by several missionary friends from Radio Station HCJB and the Gospel Missionary Union.

HCJB had expanded so much since I was last in South America that I was quite overwhelmed by what greeted my eyes there. The huge new installations at Pifo tremendously impressed us all, as did the changes on the original campus at Quito itself. The impressive new transmitters at Pifo and the nine imposing antenna towers give HCJB its rightful place among the leading broadcasting stations of the world. Along with the physical expansion there has, of course, been a commensurate increase of

staff and personnel. It was grand to meet and have fellowship with some of the older staff members, such as D. S. Clark, John Clark, Robert Savage, and others; and it was a privilege to meet new servants of the Lord.

On the very evening of the day we arrived in Quito Don Turner, of the Bible Institute of the Air, one of our Broadcast missionary family, drove us up to the marker identifying the equator. Contrary to the popular opinion that the equatorial belt is the hottest place on the globe, in Ecuador it traverses such altitudes that we actually regretted not having our topcoats along when the sun dropped below the horizon. On a previous occasion in South America I had a snowball fight on the equator with a fellow missionary!

As we were driving back to the city of Quito that night Dr. Turner called our attention to one of the great mountains near by, named Pichincha. This huge, flat-topped mountain lost its top in a volcanic explosion centuries ago. Dr Turner said, "Pichincha would have been the highest mountain of the Andes Range, and possibly of the whole world, if it hadn't blown its

top."

I thought to myself, "That's the way it is with some Christians. They could be towering leaders in the kingdom of God if they would not blow their tops." But when a man blows his top; it automatically reduces him to a lower level and prevents him from being a giant for God.

Dr. Dick and Rev. Gustafson left Quito the day following our arrival there to make a quick tour of Ecuador and to visit as many stations as they possibly could before their required early return to the States. Ralph Stuck, of the Gospel Missionary Union, escorted them on this tour.

In the meantime Anton Becker and I remained in Quito, I catching up on some very pressing correspondence and other writing, and both of us having the opportunity also for a bit of needed physical relaxation.

I spoke daily over HCJB on "The Call of the Andes" program at 9:00 p.m. Our own Back to the Bible Broadcast immediately follows "The Call of the Andes." In fact, our program is released three times daily over HCJB and has a tremendous listening audience. We were told that the

mail response from our broadcast there far exceeds that of any other English program they have. We appreciated this testimony.

On my first Sunday in Ecuador I spoke at the morning service of the "English Fellowship," held in the Quito Baptist Church and attended by various English-speaking people living in the capital city, such as government employees and those of private American corporations. That evening I preached in the First Evangelical Church of Quito at the opening service of the National Christian Convention, which was held at the same time as the Intermission Fellowship Conference of the American missionaries. My message, of course, was given through an interpreter.

At the missionary conference of the Intermission Fellowship, held on the HCJB campus, lasting some five days, there were about 150 missionaries present. It was my privilege to speak twice daily to this group of the Lord's choice servants. Our theme centered largely around the ministry of the Holy Spirit, particularly the Spirit-filled life. I believe that God directed in this, because, according to the various testimonies, the conference was a

means of real blessing to all the missionaries.

Following the conference Mr. Becker and I left Quito in company with Pilot Nate Saint and traveled by automobile and jeep down to the important mission base at the edge of the jungles—Shell Mera. This place was originally built up by the Shell Oil Company, portions of it later being purchased by the Gospel Missionary Union for a Bible Institute, and by the Missionary Aviation Fellowship to serve as their base of operation for all the jungle aviation service.

After a quick lunch at Shell Mera, Nate rolled out his "Piper," and by three o'clock that afternoon we were in the air headed for the eastern jungles. We landed at the Macuma station, just about forty-five minutes after the take-off from Shell Mera.

That was a memorable day for me—one that contained many thrills and surprises. I could hardly believe some of the things I saw and experienced. When I was last in those jungles, in 1946, I had made the trip over the high Andes and into the "oriente" jungles on muleback and on foot. Over

what it took us eight days to cover then, we flew this time in forty-five minutes; and we were worth something when we arrived!

In the earlier years the torturous jungle trekking left the traveler more dead than alive. If I live to be one hundred I will never forget how I felt when I arrived at the Macuma station, back in 1946, having waded for five days through the jungles from the older station of Sucua. It had been almost a killing trip, and when we arrived at Macuma we were almost ready to drop. To make matters worse, I had injured my leg in a muck hole, and after that every step was actual torture. Wallowing through those jungles in the mud and muck, wading the streams, or crossing rivers and canyons on trees dropped across for the purpose, and a multitude of other experiences which we cannot describe here, is something never to be forgotten. At that time the Macuma station consisted of one bamboo hut in a little hole hacked out of the jungles. Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Johnson, of the Gospel Missionary Union, had been living there for a matter of some two or three months.

When I arrived at Macuma, this time by air, I looked down and beheld what appeared to be a little village below, neatly carved out of the jungle. We arrived fresh and hardy, completely thrilled by what we saw at the station. It was our privilege to speak to the Indians that night, Frank Drown interpreting, and to spend the night there at the Macuma station. On that station today there are two missionary dwellings, an Indian church, an Indian school, a dispensary, and various other buildings and centers of gospel activity. They even have electricity! Mr. Drown had harnessed one of the little jungle streams and by means of a water wheel and generator had supplied his entire station with electricity. It was quite an experience to enter a bamboo house, walking on a bamboo floor with a straw roof overhead, flip a switch on the wall, and have flourescent lights! "It's like dreaming," I remarked.

The visit at the Macuma station was necessarily a brief one, because within a couple of days I had to return to Shell Mera, where the annual Missionary Conference of the workers of the Gospel Missionary Union was held. This conference

lasted for six days. Most of the Gospel Missionary Union missionaries were present—a family of about fifty now. Those were days of rich fellowship together in prayer, Bible study, survey of the field, reports, and sessions of the field council. I remembered when I came out of the jungles in 1946, arriving at Shell Mera, how I wished that someday the missionaries of Ecuador might have the kind of buildings and equipment that the Shell Oil Company owned. Now some of those same buildings and equipment actually belong to the missionaries and are being used to propagate the gospel. In fact, the very dormitory in which I slept in 1946, as a guest of Shell, is now the dormitory of the Bible Institute! "What God hath wrought!"

Following the Gospel Missionary Union Conference I took off from the Shell Mera airport the second time and flew back to another section of the jungles. A brief stop was made at Chupientza, a Christian and Missionary Alliance station manned by my old friends Mr. and Mrs. Moffat. The Moffats were located here in 1941, when I made my first trip to the jungles. When I arrived there then, it was

after an eight-day mule trip over the Andes; and their jungle home actually looked to me like a Paradise. This time we landed on the airstrip and taxied to within twenty feet of their front door! It was wonderful to renew fellowship with them and to see what God had wrought through their ministry among the Indians in that area.

We had an enjoyable lunch with the Moffats on that day and then took off for the Gospel Missionary Union station of Sucua, which has been manned for many years by Mr. and Mrs. Mike Ficke (also supported by the Back to the Bible Broadcast). It rained much of the time while I was in Sucua; and as there were no regularly settled missionaries at the station at the time, I did not get to see as much of the work as I normally would have. But I did rejoice greatly to see the native church and some of the other works carried on at the station. And, of course, this was the first time I had ever seen the air field which Ficke and I had dreamed, talked, and prayed about eight years before. The main purpose of my trip to the jungles in 1946 was to determine whether or not it would be practical to develop airstrips and use a

plane for the jungle work. How thrilled I was to see that God has now made that vague dream a living reality!

Returning to the Shell Mera base, Becker and I headed up into the sierra again, the highlands of the Andes, and the territory of the Quichua Indians. We spent a few days in and around Riobamba, Mr. Ernest Johnson kindly taking us around in his automobile. We visited all of the mountain stations of the Gospel Missionary Union and were able to observe a bit of the work being done now among the Quichuas.

It was also our privilege to minister one Sunday in Riobamba. This city has been hard all through the years, but it was a joy to meet a few true native Christians, standing up for Christ in the midst of opposition and persecution. If ever the spirit of fanaticism and fear in Riobamba can be broken, I believe there will be a mighty turning to the Lord in that mountain city, where the gospel has been preached to some extent for so many years.

It was a joy to visit the two new Quichua stations of the Gospel Missionary Union and to have fellowship with the missionaries in all of these places, even though

we had been together at the Shell Mera conference.

From the high Andes we made the trip down to Guayaquil on the coast by way of the Ecuadorian railroad, boarding the train in Riobamba. It is a day's journey, undoubtedly one of the most intriguing railroad trips that could be taken anywhere in the world. When this railroad was originally inaugurated by American engineers, it was considered one of the most outstanding feats ever accomplished in railroad building. From an elevation of 12,000 feet one descends in a few hours to sea level. During those same few hours the climate changes from a very cold mountain atmosphere to the intense and humid tropical heat of the coast. When a person leaves Riobamba, early in the morning, he feels like wearing an overcoat; and when he gets to Guayaquil, in the evening, he feels as though he would like to be dressed in a bathing suit!

In Guayaquil, too, I was due for some real encouragement. The native congregations have grown in size, new congregations are in existence, and new church buildings have been erected. It was a

special privilege of mine to preach one evening in the new Bethel Church of the Gospel Missionary Union. It was also a joy to see the old original church which I preached in back in 1941 now being enlarged for the second time. Both of these churches have their own native pastors, and the work is going forward under the blessing of God. It was also a privilege to preach again in the large Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Guayaquil known as the Temple. I have always deeply appreciated the fellowship of John and Allen Reed, Christian businessmen of that city and sons of Will Reed, whom God used to build up the Temple Church and whose life made such a spiritual impact upon the entire country of Ecuador. Abe Dyck, of the Gospel Missionary Union, related an interesting account of a certain man who was remarkably converted a year or so before. He had come to the meetings only a couple of times; and after an evening service he came and expressed his desire to be saved. But he said that he would return some other time and bring his son, so that they could take the step together.

Brother Dyck said, "You can accept the

Saviour now and be saved, and then you could bring your son to the Lord later."

The man immediately responded and opened his heart to Christ, and soon the two were on their knees, asking the Lord to come into his heart to save him and transform his life. There was a very apparent change in the man when they got up from their knees, and Brother Dyck felt sure that he had truly been saved. A little later, as the new convert was getting ready to leave, he turned and asked, "How much do I owe you?" reaching into his pocket as he spoke. To us such an act seems rather strange, but in the Roman Catholic system all religion is paid for with money. This man could not grasp being led to a true knowledge of the Saviour and the salvation of his soul without paying the person who had helped him. His life from that time on has revealed a remarkable transformation, and he is constantly witnessing for the Lord wherever he goes. Though he is a very poor man and almost blind, he is a very liberal giver, considering his limited resources. His life has been a great testimony to many.

After nearly a month of varied experi-

ences and blessings the day came for our leaving Ecuador and also South America. Though we had planned to stop and spend at least one more week end in Colombia, a special series of events caused us to change these plans, and we proceeded immediately to Panama, where we were to spend a few days. But before relating that part of the trip, I want to give some general observations concerning the work of the Lord in Ecuador as I now saw it.

As already stated, I had been in Ecuador twice before, in the winters of 1941-42 and 1946-47. The first time I did not see much to encourage me, but much to discourage me. The second time there was some encouragement, but still more discouragement. This time, though discouraging conditions still exist, there was much to encourage one's soul. I called the attention of the missionaries to some of these encouraging signs, seeking to lift their own spirits by doing so. I reminded them that the work of the Lord can be compared to a growing baby. The one who is with the baby all the time does not realize his growth, but the visitor who comes from time to time immediately observes it. So

it was with the work of Christ in Ecuador. Having been away for a number of years, I could see much progress made in just the last eight years.

On my first visit to Ecuador in the autumn of 1941 I had arrived by truck from the neighboring Republic of Colombia, to the north. For four long, hard days we had ridden on board benches in an ordinary truck over roads that were almost unspeakable—it was one of the hardest trips I had ever made in a vehicle in all my life.

Arriving at the Ecuadorian border town of Tulcan, we discovered that there was not a single evangelical witness in that town, although it was impressively large. As we traveled from the north on down all the way to Quito, we went through many sizable towns without passing a mission station. But this time I had the privilege of meeting the very missionaries who are living and working in Tulcan and a number of other towns through which we passed in those early days, and of hearing from them a report of what God is doing in these places. That was a tremendous joy to my soul, because through the years we have prayed for some of these towns.

At the time of my original visit to Ecuador I observed the tragic situation regarding the million Quichua Indians living in the Andes. (They are the direct descendants of the ancient Incas of historic fame.) The Gospel Missionary Union at that time had one missionary among the Quichuas who knew their language. There were three younger lady missionaries who were new among them and were just beginning the study of that difficult tongue. The Christian and Missionary Alliance had two or three missionaries among them—and that was the whole picture of missionary work among nearly one million benighted souls!

The Quichuas are Roman Catholic in name but actually pagan in heart. Their religion is a mixture of Roman Catholicism and their aboriginal paganism; which one they have the most of would be difficult to say. Their lives, for the most part, are made up of debauchery, drinking, immorality, fighting, killing, etc. Yet the picture is now somewhat more encouraging, so far as missionary work among them is concerned.

In recent years a number of missionaries

have felt the call of God to the Quichuas, and a good many more are now living and working among them than was the case a dozen years ago. New stations have been opened up among them, and more of them are now being reached with the message of the gospel. While the number of converts is still pitiably small, they seem to be more willing for their children to attend mission schools and more eager to hear and read the Scriptures. A great milestone in missionary work among the Quichuas was the publication of the New Testament in their own language in the early part of 1954, the first time they had ever had the Word of God in their tongue. The translation was made by Mrs. Julia Woodward, a Gospel Missionary Union missionary, supported by the Back to the Bible Broadcast. For her remarkable work in the translation of this Quichua New Testament she was made one of six honorary life-time members of the American Bible Society.

I have already intimated progress in the jungle work, but a few more words will be in order. When I first penetrated the jungles of the "Oriente" in 1941, the Gospel Missionary Union had one single missionary

working in the entire Jivaria, and when I arrived at his station just before Christmas of that year, I was the first white man he had seen for about a year. Even I looked good to him! In addition to this one missionary and lone station, the Christian and Missionary Alliance had Mr. and Mrs. Moffat located at Chupientza, of which mention has already been made. These three missionaries and two lone stations were the sum and substance of Christian work in the whole Jivaro Jungle. Now several new societies have come in to open up work in various parts of the jungles among the different Indian tribes, and many new missionaries are at work.

On my first visit there were very few true converts among the Jivaros. Now there are several churches, with congregations numbering up to one hundred members. Several schools are being carried on among the children, and many of them are now learning to read and write. Some of the young converted Jivaros are actually teaching and preaching the gospel to their own people. The Wycliffe Bible Translators have lately entered this field and have surveyed all of the jungle tribes, with the

purpose of reducing their language to writing and giving them the Word of God within the next few years. Praise God for what is being done!

A thing of rare interest in connection with missionary aviation is a ground-to-plane telephone which Nate Saint has devised. A number of the newer jungle stations have not yet been able to prepare landing strips, so these missionaries are supplied from the plane by means of small parachutes. But there was still the problem of communicating with the pilot as to what they needed, etc. Nate Saint has devised a method which enables him to talk from the plane to folks on the ground. He flies overhead in as small a circle as possible, dropping a telephone on a wire, attached to the other end of which he has another phone in the plane cabin. As he circles overhead, the telephone, suspended toward the ground, ultimately finds "dead center," and the missionary simply takes it and converses with the pilot in the air.

On one occasion recently a man was sick at one of the stations, and the missionary in charge reported to the pilot what the symptoms were. The pilot in turn con-

tacted Dr. Fuller, in Quito, on the two-way radio, and he prescribed for the patient on the basis of the symptoms given. It so happened that Mr. Saint had with him in the plane a supply of the very remedies prescribed, and these were speedily dropped by "chute." Within a few minutes the sick man, who was completely beyond ground contact with any medical aid, was given medicine by the doctor's prescription, and he recovered. Once again necessity has been the mother of invention.

We thank God for all the modern facilities and equipment that He has now placed at the disposal of his servants who are spreading the gospel in different parts of the world. We also thank Him for the consecrated ingenuity which He has granted to some of his servants to devise special conveniences when occasion demands. Radio and aviation have completely revolutionized the problem of evangelizing the Indians in the jungles of inner South America. When I first came to South America, the task of getting the gospel to those tribes back in the jungles seemed all but impossible. Today I can see it a coming reality. God willing, it will not be long

until every tribe in the interior of South America will have some gospel witness.

Perhaps the greatest increase in spiritual fruit has been along Ecuador's coast, in the great port city of Guayaquil and the towns along the lowland rivers. Since my first visit to Ecuador several missionaries have devoted their time and efforts to the river work, and also more effort has been put forth in Guayaquil itself. In 1941 Guayaquil, with a population of at least a quarter of a million, had only two evangelical churches, and one of these was exceedingly small. Now there are several evangelical churches in the city, and the number of believers is greatly multiplied.

New churches have sprung up in numerous river towns, and the present need is to get them rightly organized and to supply them with pastors. It was a joy to visit a number of these native churches this time, remembering that when I first came to Ecuador there were probably not more than two or three real native churches in the entire Republic.

There were probably less than half a dozen full-time native workers in Ecuador in 1941. But what a joy it was to me on

this last trip to become acquainted with numerous native preachers and Bible Institute students who are carrying on for the Lord Jesus in different parts of the country in association with the various mission boards! Whereas there was one struggling Bible Institute in Ecuador then, there are now two very promising ones engaged in training native workers to preach the gospel to their own people.

On that original occasion there were only about three mission boards at work in Ecuador and probably not more than twenty-five missionaries in all. Now there are about ten societies working in the country and approximately two hundred missionaries—ten times the number I originally found!

I could not help but rejoice in the Lord for what I saw had been wrought by His Omnipotent Hand in the entire Republic. My original impression of the country was that of a field that had been plowed, sowed, and cultivated, but which had not borne fruit. My impression of it this time was that of a field that is being worked anew and which now gives prospect of yielding a good crop. I believe the next

few years are going to witness a real harvest in this republic. Spiritually there are a good many encouragements.

Politically the conditions are not so encouraging. There are a few individuals in key positions of the government who are doing everything they can to hinder the work of evangelical missions in the country and to keep out additional missionaries. But it is our conviction that the God who has brought various things to pass thus far will see His work through to consummation and that where the enemy is striving to come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. The situation in Ecuador is extremely challenging right now and calls for earnest and prevailing prayer. With the corps of Ecuadorian workers that have been trained in these past few years in the Bible institutes and now are to preach the gospel to their own people, we may well expect a harvest. We need to pray that Satan will not successfully hinder it.

Chapter IV

HOMEWARD BOUND

Leaving Ecuador we took flight by Pan American Airways to Panama, where we spent a very profitable week end ministering and visiting a part of the Panama field. We met a good many fine American Christians in the Canal Zone and had the privilege of ministering in the First Baptist Church of Balboa one Sunday—Memorial Day. Dr. Clarence Jones, of HCJB, was temporarily supplying the pulpit at the time, during the absence of the regular pastor.

The Republic of Panama itself is a challenging mission field. Though this little country has been so close to us in many ways, it has never been adequately occupied by missionaries. Recently, however, two or three societies have seriously undertaken sending workers to the interior of this Republic, but there are still unreached tribes in Panama.

From Panama we flew back to the United States by way of various other Central American countries. One stop was in San Jose, Costa Rica, where we visited the Language School and Induction Center, at which a good many missionaries of various societies working in Latin America are busy preparing for their fields. It was a personal privilege to address these missionary candidates in the school one afternoon. We also got a little glimpse of the work of the Latin American Mission in San Jose and in one of the points near by. It was of special interest to visit Radio Station TIFC, which is operated by the Latin America Mission and which carries the Back to the Bible Broadcast daily to the listeners of Central America. A program of definite expansion was under way at TIFC, and we believe that this station will be used of God to broadcast the gospel in Central America even more effectively in the future.

We stopped briefly in Mexico City, principally to visit the headquarters there of the Wycliffe Bible Translators. While our visit with them was necessarily a brief one, we very much appreciated the oppor-

tunity of seeing how they were situated in Mexico City and of becoming acquainted with a good number of the workers who were there at the time. It was a special privilege to speak to the group at one of the morning chapel periods. The Wycliffe Bible Translators have been raised up of God for these last days, for the special ministry of reducing the unwritten languages to writing and giving illiterate people the Word of God and other Christian literature in their own tongue. We thank God for what they are doing in each country and field where they are at work.

In closing I would like to call attention to a particular experience that was ours in coming up through Central America by plane. Shortly after leaving San Jose we flew past an active volcano. The pilot accommodated us passengers by circling over the top of the volcano twice, as near to it as he dared to fly. The black and yellow smoke, pouring out of the molten crater of this mountain, and the hot cinders, spraying all over the area, killing every form of green life for miles around, was an impressive sight. Nothing can stop a volcano, once it decides to erupt!

As we looked at the awesome sight, I thought of all Latin America in a spiritual sense. The Word of God has been sown in the hearts and minds of multitudes of its people, and in some of these hearts it has become a hot and burning thing. It has produced conviction and brought illumination. But the fear of man and of organized religion keeps many people from openly coming to Christ. As I looked at that volcano, I thought about how wonderful it will be when someday a fiery spiritual revival like that breaks out all over Latin America. Surely such a time must eventually come! Revival and turning to Christ is being suppressed by the hands of evil men and obstinate religious leaders; but when conviction burns hot enough and the Word of God conquers the fear of man, we believe that there will come a burst of revival that will astound the world. The conditions seem ripe. In some places one felt that one was walking in an area where at any time revival might erupt. Let us lay hold of God, that it may come soon—for the hour is growing late.

I returned from this trip more thrilled and challenged in my own soul than from

any other I have ever taken. I am determined to keep on pressing, pushing, pleading, preaching, and praying for world evangelization. I thank God for the ministry which we at the Back to the Bible Broadcast are privileged to have in the program of world evangelism. We beseech the people of God, the country over, to unite with us and "hold up our hands" by their prayers and support.

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